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## LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE.

### FRANCE.

THE *Psychologie des idées-forces* will undoubtedly remain M. FOUILLÉE's definitive work. We meet here again the qualities of the vigorous dialectician, of the eloquent and incisive writer, so prominently displayed in M. Fouillée's previous works, and we remark again the author's intellectual subtlety, his marvellous skill in eluding the objections which apparently he meets, and his great familiarity with the dangerous art of interchanging problems. He has undertaken, however, a work of import and magnitude, which cannot fail to instruct the minds of his opponents on many points. Whether it is absolutely new, whether it marks the outbreak of a revolution in this department of thought, are questions of a different cast. Let us look more closely into the matter, keeping in mind its principal idea.

The great object of M. Fouillée (I have spoken of it before in *The Monist*) is to substitute for the psychology of "representations" a psychology of "actions and reactions." "In every state of consciousness," he says, "there exists always a volition opposed to or in favor of some action, and not simply a form of passive representation." At the bottom of all is "appetition," a dynamical element distinct from the qualitative element, which is the reason that ideas are forces. "The fundamental element, germinal in all living cells, is appetite, accompanied by more or less agreeable or painful emotions, concomitant with this or that motion, and provoking this or that motor reaction."

It is easy to interpret on these principles the facts of reflex mo-

tion, pleasure, pain, memory, etc. I can only point out here the ultimate conclusions to which M. Fouillée leads us, and for the rest we may say that the most interesting feature of M. Fouillée's work is not his psychology, but his metaphysics, taking that word in its best sense.

"A science more advanced than ours," he writes, "will find life everywhere, and with life also mentality to a certain extent, sensation, and appetite; but to reach this stage thinkers must exorcise the ghost of the unconscious." Rather than accept materialism with the dualism which it implies, "it is more logical," he maintains, "to assume that the thinking and willing subject has a mode of action that blends, or is identical, with the fundamental mode of action of objects, and that ideas are the true realities, which in the brain have simply reached a higher state of consciousness. . . . Will, being diffused everywhere in the universe, need only reflect itself progressively upon itself, thereby acquiring greater intensity of consciousness, to become in us sentiment and thought." And again, "the principle destined to dominate psychology will be ubiquity of consciousness and of will under forms more or less rudimentary, but all of which envelop a germ of discernment, a germ of well-being or ill-being, in fine, a germ of preference, and consequently that fundamental process of which the *idée-force* is the highest form."

In fine, appetite is at the bottom of all and is accompanied from the outset with pleasure and pain, with *consciousness*. These are the two facts, or the two hypotheses, about which M. Fouillée masses all his psychological conceptions, combating the idealists in the name of the first, the evolutionists in the name of the second, finally to arrive at a reconciliation of all idealism and naturalism in the conception of the *idée-force*, the *idée-activité*, which will refer to the same physiological unit, will, appetite, and consciousness.

But is it not just as true to say that our representations—our images, that is, the world of perception—mask actions and reactions in the eyes of psychologists? Does not psychology, in fine, when it treats of emotions, pleasure and pain, attention and character, really ascend to this very same primitive fact, here baptised appetite, desire, tendency, and so forth? To say, with M. Fouillée, a reflex ac-

tion is appetitive and not exclusively mechanical, is to insist upon a quality of the phenomenon which is supposed in the mechanism itself. If pleasure and pain become "states of consciousness" it is owing to a property of living matter. And as for memory, the sole fact of the diversity of memories, the foundation of aptitudes, seems to me to imply particular states of that sensibility, or appetite, which M. Fouillée tells us is its principal element. It would seem, then, that we only say what he does when we present states of consciousness as the psychological expression of physiological states, which we declare equivalent. But M. Fouillée's endeavors are directed beyond this point, namely, to reducing the physiological to the psychological, the physical to the mental.

With respect to recognising "life everywhere and with life mentality to a certain extent, sensation, and appetite," this is a mode of conception which does not detract in the least from the validity of previous psychological researches. For even though consciousness exist from the beginning, it is yet necessary to point out the stages of development at which it becomes pronounced and apparent. There is nothing *in esse*, we might say, which was not in the beginning *in potentia*. The interest of science is satisfied with nothing short of a real understanding of the modes by which things pass from potentiality to being, and of a clear exhibition of the genesis and evolution of that "consciousness," whose different states of being are so characteristic. When M. Fouillée speaks of "the permanence and the transformation of the modes of psychical energy," we agree with him. From nothing we can extract nothing. But this surely does not stand in the way of our attempting to discover how a thing originates from something and transforms itself into something, for there is always some additional thing interjected which is an epiphenomenon, or which at least is extraneously displayed and comes to enrich the primitive phenomenon, whatever our central hypothesis may be.

Now, in so far as the hypothesis of M. Fouillée consists of the statement that the thinking and willing subject has a mode of action which blends with the fundamental mode of action of the object (*l'objet pensée*), I do not dispute it, and perhaps up to this point our

whole difference is restricted to a somewhat different method of grouping known facts and of displaying our results. But if we go further and proclaim that ideas and will are the sole realities, the hypothesis assumes a less positive character. It is either Plato or it is Schopenhauer, and this does not exactly satisfy us. We have not a very extensive knowledge of ideas or of will ; and we shall abide by our knowledge of our representations and by the feeling of our personal emotions.

The work of M. Fouillée, however, will not have been in vain. It will save us from reaction to materialistic metaphysics and a great many are still in need of this assistance. That which is true and which must be retained is that we do not *explain* consciousness. As soon as we attempt to do it without expressly assuming it, we arrive in some form or other at a noumenon. Herbert Spencer has not avoided this rock, and howsoever more coherent the metaphysics of the *idée-force* is, it also does not deliver us from this difficulty.

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M. PAUL CARUS gives us a French edition wholly recast of his book *The Soul of Man*, under the new title of *Le problème de la conscience du moi*. The work is too well known to the readers of *The Monist* for me to speak of it in this place. I hope that it will not be without wide influence in our country, and I should be greatly surprised if the spirit of high moral and religious organisation, which inspires all the writings of M. Carus, did not soon attract the attention of many persons in France. For our situation in this respect is a very singular one. With us, psychological research has, especially during the last two decades, constituted nearly all of philosophy. Our reserve on the subject of vast intellectual constructions is extreme, and we have come to a standstill before the barriers of positivism established by August Comte. With regard to the religious problem this reserve amounts almost to indifference. In fact, on this subject we are plunged in an almost incurable scepticism, which has its most pronounced representatives in our real philosophers. The generation of 1848, or at least a small group of that generation, attempted a restoration of liberal Christianity ; but that was too much, or, rather, too little. To-day, if religiosity seems to

be renascent, it is only in the decadent literature and only under the color of mysticism. And we cannot expect any efficacious results from troubled spirits and feeble hearts. Our decadents, in fact, only cultivate their egos; they are incapable of broad views, and for the most part are diseased. The men of 1848, on the other hand, started from a just feeling of the social office of philosophy; unfortunately, they were not able to reconstruct it, or to base the religious sentiment, which they imperfectly understood, on a sufficient knowledge of the human soul.

Now, it is precisely with the study of the soul that M. Carus begins, whilst it is only upon psychology, as we have just seen, that M. Fouillée bases his efforts. They both meet in the affirmation of consciousness as a first reality. We should say, accurately, with M. Carus, the state of consciousness, the feeling of living substance. Whatsoever we do, we always grasp things under this point of view, and this is why the monism based on psychology, on the knowledge of the relations of our thought with the external world, with *that* of which we have images, will ultimately be a unitary conception of the world, while the old monistic systems, so called, (a distinction which M. Carus well makes,) are in fact only single-concept philosophies. The philosophies of times gone by bent all their efforts on finding some *single* fact of explanation,—movement, matter, intelligence, etc.,—and they give us thus only *logical* metaphysics. On the other hand it is necessary that a real general explanation should throw no shadow on any of the primordial facts; it should never consist of an arbitrary reduction of the elements of the world to any individual one of these elements.

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And now, 'while I am on this subject of depicting the public mind of France, I must mention an amiable little book which sends forth a clear angelus-note into the twilight of our beliefs. This little book bears the simple title *Philosophie de poche* (Pocket Philosophy).<sup>\*</sup> Its author is M. JEAN MACÉ, the founder of the "Ligue de l'enseignement" which is preparing the way for a reformation of our schools,

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<sup>\*</sup> Published by Hetzel. The other works are published by Félix Alcan.

at present a senator, but by taste still an educator,\* one of those rare men who unite with intellectual acuteness common-sense and kindness, and who take their years without growing old. M. Macé is not the champion of dangerous or fragile novelties. He declares himself religious, without definition. He finds God in the order of the world, and morality in the consciousness which we have of the order of the world. He does not make fine distinctions, and when he strolls into the domain of science, does so, as it were, purely for recreation. Man, he tells us in his summing up, should seek his happiness in the sphere in which his grandeur lies, "in the sentiment of his dignity, in the love of the true which puts him at peace with his reason, and in the love of the good which puts him at peace with his conscience." His God is "that for which mothers have found the name, the naïve personification of the idea of the good, that sweet and simple rule of life which we obey with confidence, which dispenses with all theology." And he adds: "The good God of the little children is still the most philosophical of all, the only one which is not an *x*. He goes straight to the heart without troubling the mind, in Him is our refuge. If you are not as one of these little children, says the Gospel, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

Surely there is nothing here which will cause violent revolutions in the world, and M. Macé gently gives us perfect freedom without demolishing any traditional barriers. But these simple lessons, these prescriptions of a salutary régime, are worth much more to us in preparing the way for the future than all the negative decrees of vain ignorance.

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I experience a feeling which amounts almost to painfulness when I pass from the book of M. Macé to that of M. MAURICE BLONDEL, *L'action, Essai d'une critique de la vie et d'une science de la pratique*. Far from being so facile and fluent, it is, on the contrary, difficult, and smacks of the school. And all the more pity it is, as its aim is high, and M. Bondel is one of those who could have got

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\* I would recommend to educators his *Contes du Petit-Chateau*, real master-pieces, and in a literary point of view superior to most romances.

much useful instruction from the Congress of Religions—that significant feature of your World's Fair.

His thesis consists in justifying the necessity of action and in showing that this conforms to the deepest aspiration of man. "Not being able hitherto," he writes, "to unite action perfectly with thought, nor conscience with science, we have all, both the boor and the philosopher, been obliged to remain like infants, naïvely docile, in the empiricism of duty." Suppose we follow this road ; we shall soon see whether we shall have to regret it. But let us also make ourselves, by strict method, participants of the contrary course. For the matter of great importance to us is to know "whether beyond the obscurities through which we must march . . . whether, amidst all the aberrations of the mind and of the heart, there exist, despite all, the germs of a science and the principles of a profound revelation such that nothing shall appear arbitrary or unexplained in the destinies of each." It is necessary for us to bring face to face with errors, negations, and weaknesses of all sorts, the latent truth on which souls live and of which, perhaps, they die, for all eternity." That latent verity is the supposition of the supernatural, the unconquerable desire for a "saviour," the profound feeling of co-operating with God. And in the thought of M. Blondel the supernatural is given by Christian "revelation." I am very careful when skirting the precipices of dialectics. But the reader may judge for himself. I shall leave him in the vestibule of this work. Criticism can get no hold of matters of faith.

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I find myself restricted to a mere mention of the rather large volume of M. VICTOR DELBOS, *Le problème moral dans la philosophie de Spinoza et dans l'histoire du Spinozisme*, a conscientious study, but somewhat heavy ; the excellent book of M. JULES PAYOT, *L'éducation de la volonté* ; and *Les lois sociologiques*, by M. GUILLAUME DE GREEF, a Belgian author, known for several other works ; *Le droit des femmes dans le mariage, études critiques de législation comparée*, by M. LOUIS BRIDEL of Geneva, where the question of the rights of women is seriously discussed.

I must also refer, with much regret at not being able to speak



at length of it, to the French translation of a work of M. TH. ZIEGLER which has already reached its fourth edition in Germany, entitled *La question sociale est une question morale*. This book is a remarkable one, and we read here with interest of what concerns the difficult problems of socialism, of the perfecting of the social condition of State and Church, of the family, of woman, and so forth. M. Ziegler discovers in this book a clear mind and one which is neither retrogressive nor Utopian.

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